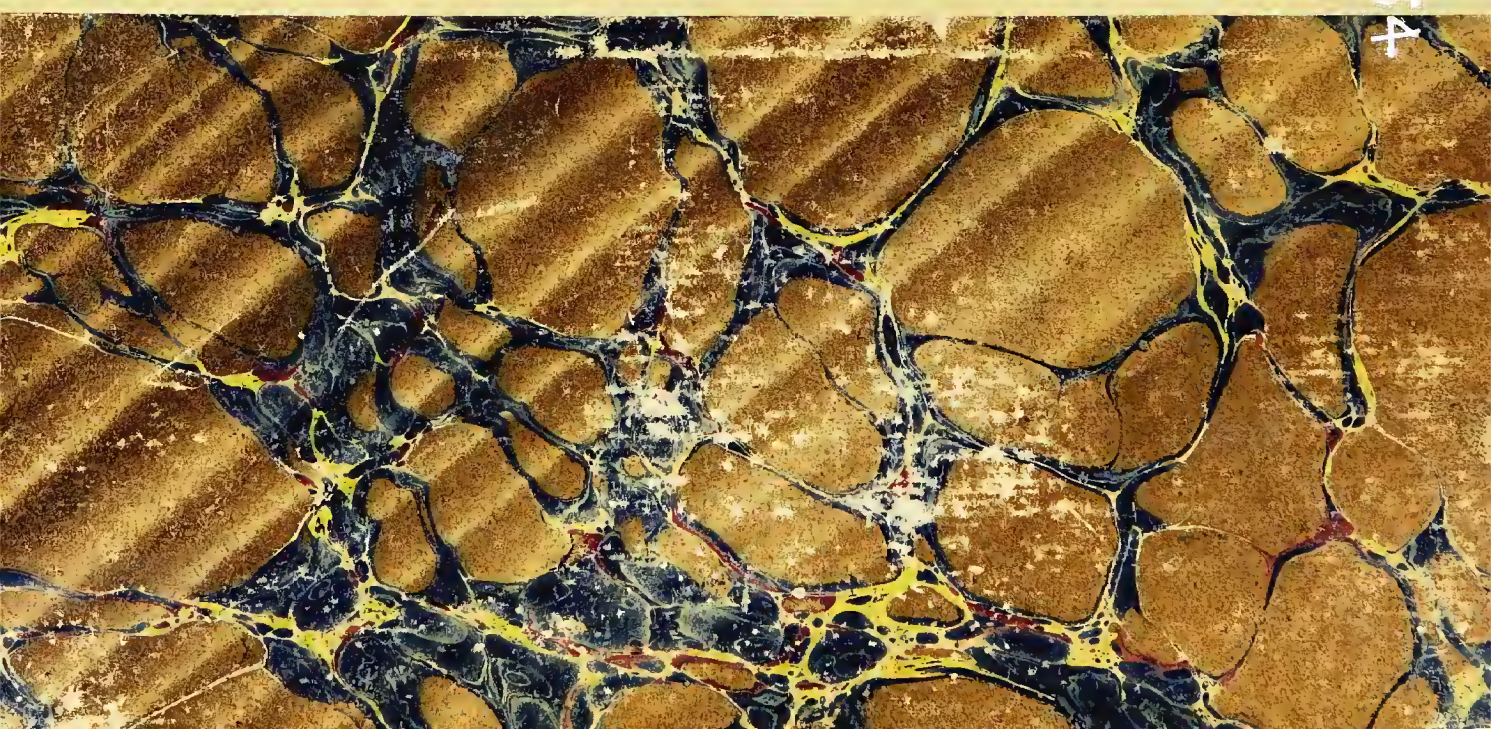
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AN ESSAY

ON THE TRAGEDY OF

"Arden of Feversham,"

Being the substance of a paper read at the Meeting of the Kent Archæological Society held at Faversham, in July, 1872, with Notes,

BY

C. E. DONNE, M.A.,

Vicar of Faversham, and Chaplain to Viscount Sydney, G.C.B.

PRICE, ONE SHILLING.

LONDON:

RUSSELL SMITH & Co.
HIGHAM, FAVERSHAM.

1873.



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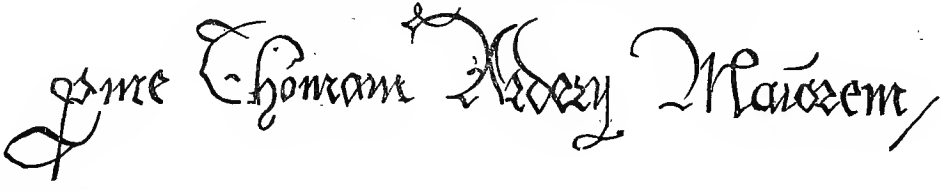
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Ah me, vile wretch, that ever I was born,
Making myself unto the world a scorn:
And to my friends and kindred all a shame,
Blotting their blood by my unhappy name.

From Old Ballad "The Complaint and Lamentation of Mistresse Arden of Feversham."

(Fac-simile of ARDERN'S Handwriting.)



Per me, THOMAM ARDERN, Maiorem.

(Signed) by me, THOMAS ARDERN, Mayor.

From the above it appears that he spelt his name ARDERN, and so it generally appears in the Faversham Wardmote Book. I have though in this essay invariably spelt the name Arden, as it is in the play.

I am indebted to F. F. Giraud, Esq., the Town Clerk, for this signature, as well as for the extracts from the Wardmote Book.

Persons represented in the Tragedy.

MR. ARDEN, of Feversham

FRANCKLIN (his Friend)

MOSBIE

CLARKE (a Painter)

ADAM FOWLE (Landlord of the *Flower de Luce*)

BRADSHAW (a Goldsmith)

MICHAEL (Arden's Servant)

GREENE

RICHARD REEDE (a Sailor)

BLACK WILL, SHAKEBAG } Murderers

A. PRENTICE

A FERRYMAN

LORD CHENEY, and his men

MAYOR OF FEVERSHAM, and Watch

ALICE (Arden's wife)

SUSAN (Mosbie's sister)

Scene: Feversham—London and there between

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM. *

Mr. Thomas Arden † was chief comptroller of his Majesty's Customs at Faversham. He was a jurat ‡ in 1544, and was once elected Mayor of that town in 1548. He seems to have been a gentleman of consequence by being employed to procure a new Charter for the said town, upon the dissolution of the Abbey there. By his marriage with the daughter-in-law of Sir Edward North, and his connections with Sir Thomas Cheney, K.G., Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, and Constable of Queenborough Castle, § he procured grants from the Crown of a considerable

* Spelt so in the Play, but Faversham is the correct name—originally Fauresfeld (A.S.)

† His signature appears in the Faversham Wardmote Book.

‡ From Records of Faversham, folio 58, December 22nd, 1550.—Also Thomas Arden, by cause, he beyng Jurate, and sworne to maynteyn the franchises, liberties, and fredoms of the said towne had, contrarye to his othe, in that behalf, gone aboute and labored by dyvers wayes and meanes to the uttermost of hys power to infryndge and undoo the said franchises, liberties and fredoms; that, therefore, the said Thomas Arden shall be deposed from the Benche, and no more to be juratte of the said towne, but from hensfoorth to be utterlye disfranchised for ever.

§ Sir Thomas Cheney died in 1558, and was buried in the chancel of Minster Church, Isle of Sheppey. The family of Cheney were connected collaterally with the Tudors.

part of the Estate of the late dissolved Abbey.* He seems to have been well disposed, † by his charitable donation of some houses and land to the Corporation, for the benefit of the poor, and for an annual sermon to be preached in commemoration of the Benefactors of the town, in which his charity was to be recited, and as his words were "In order to provoke other good men to do the like." ‡

Arden of Faversham was printed anonymously, first in 1592, and performed probably a year or two earlier. It was reprinted in 1599 and 1633, and again in 1770, § by Jacob, who was the first, on the strength of certain parallel passages, or passages which he thought parallel, to assign it to Shakespeare; Jacob generally selects mere conventional expressions and common phrases at the time, in proof of his hypothesis; but many contemporary plays written between 1592 and 1600 would stand such a test far better than Arden does, especially "A Warning for fair Women," printed in 1599, but composed and produced several years before

* Vid. Play, Act 1, Sc. 1.
† Vid. Preface to Jacob's Arden of Faversham, p. 4.
‡ This Legacy was contested and partly set aside afterwards.
§ It was reprinted at Elberfeld in 1851. The original was not divided into Acts and Scenes. This division first appears in the edition of 1851, printed by Sam Lucas, at Elberfeld.

that year. Like Arden, this drama relates to the murder of a London merchant, named Sanders, by one Brown, his wife's paramour. There is among the dramatists of the 16th century, and in the early part of the 17th, a species of representation that forms a class by itself, it may be called "domestic tragedy," and pieces of this kind were founded upon comparatively recent events in England. Of these, besides Arden, and a "Warning for fair Women," are extant, * "Two tragedies in one," founded upon the assassination of a London merchant, of the name of Beech, by a person called Thomas Merry, also "The fair Maid of Bristol," originating in a recent tragical incident. The 'Yorkshire tragedy,' a little later, founded on an event in 1604, was played at the Globe (Shakespeare's) Theatre, and probably was revised and touched-up by him. †

* For an account of this play, see Beloe's Anecdotes, vol. 1, p. 380.

† A Yorkshire tragedy, ascribed to Shakespeare, by Baker, Stevens, &c. No less than five dramatists, viz:—Greene, Marlowe, Nash, Peele, Lodge, and two others (names unknown) announced their determination to retire from their calling, on account of monopoly, which this young man from Stratford-on-Avon secured for himself. Their envy was not of that kind which Addison calls "sinless." Shakespeare contributed dramas to Lord Strange's Company; to the Company of the Earl of Sussex; to the Companies of the Earl of Worcester and Pembroke, &c.

A tragedy once ascribed to Shakespeare, * and at first printed with others among his unquestioned Plays may be presumed, even allowing for the rudeness of the time in which it was written, to have possessed no ordinary merit ; Professor Tieck, whose Essays on Shakespeare and translation of his plays entitled him to give a sound opinion on the matter, inclined to think that Arden of Faversham is a genuine work of our great National poet. Perhaps his judgment would have been different had he been a native of England, and not merely an excellent English scholar. True it is that the speeches in this Tragedy have in them some passion and pathos, but there is a great sameness, a lack of variety and contrast. There are no traces of the active fancy and exuberant art of Shakespeare. To fathom the bent or depth of thought, to follow his images, Shakespeare requires strict attention in the reader. Whereas he that runs may read and fully comprehend Arden of Faversham, allowance indeed being made for the age of the language in which it is written.

* London Prodigal. Sir John Oldcastle. Thomas Lord Cromwell. The Puritan, Locrine. Edward 3rd. Merry Devil of Edmonton. Fair Em. Mucedorus. The Birth of Merlin. The two noble Kinsmen, and other plays have also been fathered on Shakespeare.

The murder of Arden occurred in the time of Edward VI., but the play was not published till 1592.

"Murderous Michael" was perhaps an early version of "Arden of Faversham." It was performed before the Queen (Elizabeth) in 1578, Michael being a very prominent personage, and one of Arden's assassins. Possibly the play might be founded upon the elder performance, although Michael, in "Arden of Faversham," is one of the least guilty of the whole party concerned in the murder; Michael's character may be judged of from the following speech, when contemplating the murder of Arden, his master.

"I, that should take the weapon in my hand,
And buckler thee from ill intending foes;
Do lead thee with a wicked fraudful smile,
As unsuspected to the slaughter-house—
So have I sworn to Mosbie and my mistress,
So have I promised to the slaughter-men;
And should I not deal currently with them,
Their lawless rage would take revenge on me.
I will spurn at mercy for this once,
Let pity lodge where feeble women lie,
I am resolved, and Arden needs must die!"

This tragedy, independent of its local interest, as connected with the County of Kent and the town of Faversham, is not

devoid of Archæological value. It is one of the earliest English domestic dramas, written in blank verse. * It is also one of the comparatively few plays of the 16th century, of which the plot and action are founded upon English life and manners. It is founded upon a home-bred story, † and it represents the life and the household of a rich country gentleman.‡ In its scenes you may find many features of the stormy days of Edward VI. and the Protector Somerset. As it is possible that some of my readers on this occasion, even if acquainted with George Lillo's § later drama (finished by Dr. John Hoadly) *on the same subject*, may not have looked at the play which Lillo altered, it may be convenient to sketch the plot of Arden. ‖ "Alice, the wife of Arden, young, tall, and well-favored of shape and countenance, is in love with Mosbie, a man of low extraction,

* Marlowe's tragedy of "Tamberlain the Great" is one of the first examples extant of a play written almost entirely in blank verse. Our earliest serious drama—indeed, Lord Buckhurst's "Ferrex and Porrex," or "Gorboduc," is written in that measure; but his example was by no means commonly followed. The Blank verse when employed was mixed up with ten-syllable rhyme. Arden of Faversham, however, is nearly devoid of this admixture.

† Vide Note at end of this Essay.

‡ In this particular, its author ranks with Heywood, many of whose plays are purely pictures of English life at the time.

§ 1759. Acted at Drury Lane.—Geo. Lillo, author of "George Barnwell," "Fatal Curiosity," &c.

‖ Vid. Hollinshead's Chron., p. 1703, Col. 2, and Lewis's Faversham, p. 52.

residing in the same place. Her guilt is the more flagrant, because not only is her husband a kind and indulgent one, but also a handsome and prosperous gentleman, whereas her lover is a soulless wretch, a vulgar and ugly fellow, a black-swart man, originally a tailor, but by transmutation like Christopher Sly's who tell us that he was 'by birth a pedlar, by education a card maker, by transmutation a bear herd,' by transmutation a servant to the Lord North. The wife and her ill-favored lover determine to rid themselves of Arden, and lay several plots against his life, two or three of them are marred unexpectedly; but at last the murder was perpetrated. Their first scheme was to get him dispatched in London, whither he went on business, and in those troublous times when the distractions and distresses occasioned partly by the change in religion, and partly by the confusion following on Henry the Eighth's death,* a sickly boy on the throne, and ambitious noblemen striving for the Government of him and the realm, threw on society hundreds of ruffians, ready for any work that

* "The rulers and ministers of justice that sometimes spake for the common weal, were all gone!"—The Ruyn of a Ream, Ballads, &c., p. 159.—"Great and horrible" punishments were appointed for thieves, but all in vain, because no penalty was severe enough to deter those from crime who had no other craft."—Utopia, p. 37.

might put money in their purses. Dame Arden and ex-tailor Mosbie found murderers as easily as Macbeth does, when he wishes to get rid of an inconvenient and a suspicious, if not too knowing, a friend. They employed three assassins, Black Will, Shakebag, and Greene, together with Michael, Arden's servant, for their purpose. Black Will and Shakebag were professionals in the art of killing, Greene considered himself wronged by Arden, to whom the Protector had granted some land, hitherto occupied by him. And here is a sign of the times, for it was land once appertaining to Faversham Abbey that Greene lost, and Arden got; the Protector Somerset, like the late most dread sovereign Henry, bestowing liberally to others, both goods and land, that never lawfully were his to have, to hold or give to others.

The bribe to Michael, the serving man, was the hand of Mosbie's sister Susan, who being, it would seem, a servant of all work in Arden's house, made herself very useful when he was knocked on the head. The London plot failed; the ruffians, however, followed their intended victim to Faversham, intending to do for him in the Isle of Sheppy,

but they are once more disappointed. Arden meeting on his road * with Lord Cheney and his men, who are too many in number for the plotters to do their errand safely for themselves. Thus thwarted, they came to the conclusion, that there is no place like home † for earning their money. So they wait, though vexed with one another, and with the perverse Arden himself especially, for not coming (like Mrs. Bonds' ducks) to be killed, until they see him safe to his own door. Arden, most unaccountably, has taken Mosbie into some sort of favour, so the latter has no difficulty in getting his agents into the house.

"They conveyed Black Will into Master Arden's house, putting him into a closet at the end of his parlour. Before this, they had sent out of the house all the servants, those excepted which were privy to the devised murder. Then went Mosbie to the door, and there stood in a nightgown of silk girded about him, and this was betwixt six and seven of the clock at night. Master Arden, having been at a neighbour's house of his, named Dumpkin, and having cleared certain reckonings betwixt them, came home, and finding Mosbie standing at the door, ‡ asked him if it were supper time? I think not—(quoth

* In the Broomy close, near Sheppey Ferry.

† They resolved to slay him in his own house, during St. Valentine's fair.

‡ Part of Arden's house is still in existence, and the gateway through which his body was carried.

Mosbie)—it is not yet ready.* Then let us go and play a game at the tables † in the mean season, said Arden; and so they went straight into the parlour: and as they came by through the hall, his wife was walking there, and Master Arden said: How now, Mistress Alice? But she made small answer to him. In the meantime, one chained the wicket-door of the entry. When they came into the parlour, Mosbie sat down on the bench, having his face towards the place where Black Will stood. Then Michael stood at his master's back, holding a candle, to shadow Black Will, that Arden might by no means perceive him coming forth. In their play, Mosbie said thus: (the watchword for Black Will's coming forth) "Now, may I take you, Sir, if I will? Take me—(quoth Arden)—which way?" With that, Black Will stepped forth, and cast a towel ‡ about his neck, so to stop his breath and strangle him,—then Mosbie, having at his girdle, a pressing-iron § of fourteen pounds weight, struck him on the head with the same, so that he fell down, and gave a great groan, insomuch that they thought he had been killed." ‖

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* In the play this conversation is with the wife:—

Arden: "Come, Alice, is our supper ready yet?"

Alice: "It will, by then you have play'd a game at tables!"

† Tables.—This game was in use among the Romans, and was in all probability borrowed from them by the Anglo-Saxons. Vid. "Wright's History of Domestic Manners during the Middle Ages," p. 218.—It was a game somewhat resembling Backgammon played with dice.—When he plays at tables—chides the dice. "Loves Labor Lost," Act 5, Sc. 2,—termed also "Traytrip in Twelfth Night," Act 2, Sc. 5.—Nay then, two trays, "Loves Labor Lost," Act 5, Sc. 2.

‡ A napkyn.—"Wardmote Book."

§ A tailor's iron.—*Mosbie*: "There's for the pressing-iron you told me of."—Mosbie also used a dagger.—"Wardmote Book," and a knife, "Old Ballad."

‖ Holinshead's Chronicle, p. 1703, col. 2.

They now all lend a hand to the murder; Mrs. Arden seemingly giving the *coup-de-grace*, for why should this marplot any longer hinder Mosbie's love and hers? * The body is secretly conveyed to a field behind the house,† but bloody stains are left on the floor, and it being winter time, the steps of the murderers are imprinted on the snow, that had suddenly fallen before the murder, and inconsiderately left off, just as it might have done Black Will and Co. service by hiding the footmarks. Guests have been invited by the now late Mr. Arden, and arrive rather too punctually for the interest of the survivors in the house, and worse than guests, the Mayor of Faversham with the watch at his heels arrives too, making particular inquiries for Black Will, whom his Worship has in his pocket a Council's warrant to apprehend. Concealment is no longer possible, the body is found, Mrs. Arden and Mosbie confess, and together with Susan and Michael (whose wish to be united is gratified by their being hung together) ‡ are led forth to execution.

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* *Alice*..... ..... Give me the weapon!
Take this for hind'ring Mosbie's love and mine.

† To a field next to the Churchyard called the Ambry Croft.

‡ *Susan*: Seeing no hope on earth, in heaven is my hope.
Michael: Faith, I care not, seeing I die with Susan.

No one indeed of the parties concerned in this foul and unnatural murder dies in his or her bed. Bradshaw * was executed in Faversham, and the epilogue informs us that Shakebag † was eventually murdered in Southwark. Black Will ‡ was burnt in Flushing at a stake; Greene was hanged at Ospringe; and Dame Arden was burnt at Canterbury § hanging in those days being thought too easy a death for women.

The writer of the Epilogue seems to have thought that Master Arden was served as such a sacrilegious varlet deserved to be, for he adds to his brief Newgate calendar—

"But this above the other, the rest is to be noted,
Arden lay murdered in that plot of ground, ‖

* Bradshaw seems to have been innocent of the murder.—"Was I ever privy to your intent or no? "—He was hung in chains.

† Shakebag—his real name was Loosebag. He was born at Seasalter, and bred to the water.—"Wardmote Book."

‡ In Registers of the Privy Council, 15th June, 1551, there is a letter to Sir William Godolphine Knight, of thanks for his diligence in the apprehension of Black Will.

§ Petit Treason, according to the statute, 25 Ed. III., c. 2, may happen three ways by a servant killing his master, *a wife her husband*, or an ecclesiastical person (either secular or regular) his superior, to whom he owes faith and obedience.

The punishment of Petit Treason, in a man, is to be drawn and hanged, and in a *woman* to be drawn and *burned*. The idea of which latter punishment seems to have been handed down to us by the laws of the ancient Druids, which condemned a woman to be burned for murdering her husband, and it is now the usual punishment for all sorts of treasons committed by those of the female sex.—*Blackstone.* Bk. 4, Ch. 14.

The stat. 9, Geo. 4, c. 31, however, enacted every offence deemed Petit Treason before the passing of the Act, shall be deemed to be murder.

‖ Church lands. Vid. Act 4, Se. 4. Act 5, Se. 6.

Which he by force and violence held from Reade;
And in the grass his body's print was seen
For years and more after the deed was done!"

The Epilogue in these words resembles closely the winding up of a Greek Chorus, telling us after almost everybody is killed :—

Such are the ways of the Gods,
Many things oddly contriving,
At their end strangely arriving,
What they expected and wished for,
Unlucky mortals are dished for,
A game quite of even and odds.
People *die* when we looked they should *marry*,
And all matters plotted miscarry.

Those who are of opinion that this drama is the production of Shakespeare * have laid stress on the name Arden; the maiden name of Shakespeare's mother was Arden, † and so might have attracted his attention. The Earl of Leicester's ‡ players were in Faversham in 1590, and if Shakespeare was connected with the Earl of Leicester at this time, this fact would throw an air of probability over the claim for the Shakespearian Authorship of this Play. The plot also is taken from a book which Shakespeare had carefully

* Vid. Jacob's "Arden of Faversham," p. 6. The preface to the Elberfeld Ed. Chas. Knight's "Pictorial Shakespeare," and Edinburgh Review, No. 144, p. 471.

† A name (in her case) probably derived from some remote ancestor who had emigrated from the forest of Ardennes.

‡ Vid. Notes from the Records of Faversham, by J. M. Cowper, F.H.S., p. 27.

read—the "Chronicle of Holinshead." I do not think that "Arden of Feversham" is Shakespeare's work; but it is by no means improbable that he may have thought it worth his while to take a hint or two from it, which may account for some "resemblance." The very ascription of it to Shakespeare, though made so long after his death, shows it to have been a piece of mark in its day. There is a sort of dawn of Shakespeare in Mosbie's speech, Act 3, Sc. 5. *

Disturbèd thoughts drive me from company,
And dry my marrow with their watchfulness;
Continual trouble of my moody brain,
Feebles my body by excess of drink,
And nips me as the bitter north-east wind
Doth check the tender blossoms in the spring.
Well fares the man howe'er his cates do taste,
That tables not with foul suspicion;
And he but pines amongst his delegates,
Whose troubled mind is stuff'd with discontent.
My golden time was when I had no gold,
Though then I wanted, yet I slept secure;
My daily toil begat my night's repose,
My night's repose made daylight fresh to me;
But since I climb'd the top bough of the tree,
And sought to build my nest among the clouds,
Each gentle stirry gale doth shake my bed,
And make me dread my downfall to the earth!
But whither doth contemplation carry me?
The way I seek to find where pleasure dwells—
Is hedg'd behind me that I cannot back;
But needs must on, although to danger's gate! †

* The blank-verse metre of this passage bears a close resemblance to that of the "Merry Devil of Edmonton," also attributed to Shakespeare.

† Vide Macbeth, Act 3, Sc. 4—"I am in blood stept in so far," &c.

Local Allusions and Notes.

Act 1, *Sc.* 1.—Flower de Luce, an Inn, formerly situated in Abbey Street, nearly opposite Arden's house.

Act 1, *Sc.* 1.—Farm at Bocton.—Boughton sub. Blean, looking down on Canterbury. Boughton-hill is noticed by Lydgate in an additional Canterbury tale.

Act 2, *Sc.* 1.—Lion (Inn) at Sittingbourne. At this Inn an entertainment was given to Henry 5th, as he returned from the battle of Agincourt, in 1415.

Act 2, *Sc.* 2.—To the Nags Head.—This Tavern was the fictitious scene of the consecration of the Protestant bishops at the accession of Queen Elizabeth.

Act 3, *Sc.* 1.—" Methinks I see them with their bolster'd hair."—Bolstered means blood-besmeared. See Macbeth, *Act* 4.—" The blood *boltered* Banquo," which is the same word.

Act 3, *Sc.* 4.—Rainham Down.— The country near Rainham seems in the 16th century to have been so open as to have entitled it to the appellation of a Down.—In Shakespearian times this spot had a very bad reputation. It is spelt Raymon Down in the old Ballad on Arden.

Act 3, *Sc.* 4.—The Salutation in Billingsgate, a famous Tavern in Ben Jonson's time. It is named in " Bartholomew Fayre."

Act 3, *Sc.* 6.—Jack of Feversham—probably a well-known coward.—" Raw tricks of these bragging Jacks."—Merchant of Ven., III, 4.

Act 4, *Sc.* 3.—Hock Monday.—The holiday, called Hock Monday, or Hoke day, German—"Hoch Montag,"—was usually observed on the day following the 2nd Sunday after Easter-day. John Rouse, or Ross, the historian, of Warwickshire, in which county the holiday was in the 16th and 17th centuries (if not later) duly observed, says that on high or holy Monday, the people, both men and women, divided into parties, used to hold a rope across the road, barring the way and pulling to them the passers by who were obliged to pay a toll, the sum of which was supposed to be applied to pious uses. There was a Hock Tuesday devoted to similar purpose. The day appears to have varied in different places. Some have supposed it to have been a festival commemorative of the massacre of the Danes in the reign of Athelstan, the Unready, which took place on the 13th November, 1002; others that it perpetuated the memory of deliverance of England from the Government of the Danes, by the death of Hardicanute, on Tuesday, the 8th of June, 1041. Neither of these dates agrees with the day following, shortly after Easter day. There was, however, an ordinance of Ethelred which transferred it from a winter or summer month to the 2nd week after Easter, and at that time the festival was held at Coventry, at least on both Monday and Tuesday following Easter Sunday, the time answering very closely to the *Quindena Paschæ* of the Latin Church.

Act 4, *Sc.* 4.—"He is coming from Shurland."—Shurland is in the Isle of Sheppey. Margaret, the only daughter of Sir Robert Shurland, married William, son of Sir Alexander Cheney, which entitled Sir Alexander to this Manor, of which he died possessed, in the 8th year of Edward 3rd, anno 1323.—Shurland Castle figures in Ingoldsby's amusing "Grey Dolphin."

Act 5, *Sc.* 1.—"Enter the Mayor of Faversham."—Jacob in his list carries up the Mayor's names to 1292.

Act 5, *Sc.* 1.—"I saw him walking behind the Abbey."—Faversham Abbey (Cluniac) was founded by King Stephen and his Queen. They were buried in the Church of the Abbey (S. Saviour's.)

Act 5, *Sc.* 4.—Therefore must I in some *Oyster boat*, at last be fain to go abroad some *hoy*, and so to Flushing.—The Faversham oysters (says Hasted) are of the same kind as those which were so highly esteemed by the Romans.—The Dutch give a preference to these oysters of the Faversham grounds before all others along this coast.

Act 5, *Sc.* 4.—"The Constable had twenty warrants to apprehend me; besides that, I robbed him and his man once at *Gads hill*."—Gads hill means Rogues hill. As early as 1588, the ballad of Gads hill (by Faire) celebrates its nocturnal pastimes.--Clavell's "Recantation," published in 1634, speaks of

> "Gad's Hill, and those
> Red tops of mountains where good people lose
> Their ill-kept purses."
> Vid. 1st part of Henry iv., Act 1, Sc. 2.

Act 5, *Sc.* 5.—*Alice*: "Let my death make amends for all my sin."—Vide "*Much ado about nothing*," *Act* 4, *Sc.* 1, "Death is the fairest cover for her shame."

Act 5, *Sc.* 6.—Ospringe, in Kent.—Ospringe adjoins Faversham.—In an old Ballad on the same subject as this tragedy (date uncertain, vide Evans's old Ballads, vol. 3, p. 217) it is spelt Osbridge, as also in the 1633 Ed. of this play.—The ballad above-mentioned (Evans says), is reprinted from an old black letter copy. It must have been greatly modernised, for the language or metre in which it is written is neither the measure nor the speech of the 16th or 17th century. It remains, therefore, a question difficult to decide whether the play is indebted to an older form of this ballad.

FAVERSHAM THEATRE.—"Arden of Feversham" I have been informed, has often been acted at the Faversham Theatre, especially under the Baker's, Dowton's and Penley's management. Mr. Dowton, the great actor of old men and eccentric comedy at Drury Lane, married one of Mrs. Baker's daughters. By this marriage he became possessed of most of Mrs. Baker's Theatres, viz., Faversham, Canterbury, Folkestone, and Hastings. Mr. Buckstone, the celebrated comedian, belonged to this little circuit when quite a young man, and was in it for about twelve months. In the same company was also Thomas Sidney Cooper, who is now a wealthy and popular R.A., he being at that time a boy scene painter.—Faversham Theatre originally stood where the entrance gates to the Railway Station are now placed.

TITLE OF PLAY.—"The lamentable and true tragedy of M. Arden of Feversham, in Kent.—London: Printed for Edward White, dwelling at the lyttle North Dore of Paules Church, at the sign of the Gun, 1592."—Reprinted by J. and J. March, for Stephen Doorne, bookseller at Faversham, 1770.—(Printing was not introduced into Faversham till 1770.)—Turning to the titles of earlier plays we find them to have been derived from very various sources. There was the strictly classical drama, such as Gascoigne's "Jocasta": a free version of the "Phænician Women," of Euripides. There was the "Damon and Pythias," of Edwardes, which, though as unclassical a play as it is possible to conceive in its fable and characters, is yet derived from a Greek story, and the scene laid at Syracuse. There were plays also but little removed in form from their predecessors—the religious plays, entitled "Mysteries and Moralities," and which as in the case of "The Four P's" were employed as polemical satires against the Church of Rome. There were many tragedies founded upon our Chroniclers, Sir Thomas More, Holingshed, Hall, and Rastrell's "Past-time of people," or Lord Buckhurst's "Mirrour for Magistrates." "Arden of Feversham," however, belongs to no one of these classes. It is founded upon a home-bred story, giving a picture of English life at the time, and as such I have thought it worthy of this brief notice.



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